

## Illinois' congressional delegation reacts to weekend shootings

By City Room and the Associated Press

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Some members of Illinois' delegation to Congress are calling for a toned-down political rhetoric after the mass shootings in Arizona over the weekend.

Local congressmen are expressing sadness and outrage at the weekend shooting in Arizona that left at least six people dead and wounded 14 others, including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

First-term Republican Congressman Robert Dold of Illinois said the "deplorable actions of one" won't affect the ability of U.S. representatives to do their jobs.

Illinois U.S. Senator Mark Kirk, a Republican, says many members of Congress are on edge because of the shooting.

"We certainly will work with the police force of each town that we're in," Kirk said. "Alert them to the meeting, prepare them in advance just in case there's any temptation by a local wacko to do a copycat kind of thing."

Kirk said he hopes partisan rhetoric in national politics is toned down.

Meanwhile, Democratic Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Evanston, said she agrees. Schakowsky added it's time to look at the different gun laws around the country.

"I think that the easy accessibility to all kinds of people who shouldn't have guns is something that we need to discuss," she said.

Still, both Schakowsky and Kirk said they won't change their visibility to constituents.

Illinois Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. said there are troubled and desperate people watching television and listening to the radio and reacting to heated political rhetoric. "And they're becoming very and increasingly anxious to do something about 'taking their government back,'" Jackson said. "This is our government. This government belongs to all of us. Some of this rhetoric, I believe, is contributing to an anxiety in this country that's unnecessary."

The Senate's number-two Democrat, Illinois' Dick Durbin, told CNN that toxic rhetoric can lead unstable individuals to believe violence is an acceptable response.

Illinois Congressman Bobby Rush said he's "very concerned" about his own safety and the safety of other representatives following the attack.

The Chicago Democrat told The Associated Press the climate for political leaders is bad, particularly for those who've supported President Barack Obama.

Giffords has described herself as a former Republican and current moderate centrist Democrat.

Rush said he's told those around him to be more vigilant, but said he doesn't plan to scale back on any public appearances.

*The Associated Press contributed to this story.*